Distr. LIMITED

E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.XIII/92/3.1
31 March 1992

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Thirteenth meeting of the Africa
Regional Coordinating Committee
for the Integration of Women in
Development (ARCC)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
8-10 April 1922

REPORT OF THE MEETING

1. The sixth Meeting of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development within the subregion of the Great Lakes Countries was held on 25 and 26 March 1992 in Gisenyi, Republic of Rwanda, in the MULPOC Room. It was organized in pursuance of ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 714 (XXVI) which requested that the subregional committees for the integration of women in development should meet before the end of 1991. Since the meeting was not held before the end of 1991 owing to the lack of a quorum, it was held concurrently with the meeting of the Follow-up and Evaluation Committee.

Attendance

2. The three countries of the subregion, namely: Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire attended the meeting. The list of participants is appended herewith.

Account of the proceedings

A. Opening ceremony (agenda item 1)

3. The meeting was opened by Mrs. Venantie Mukankusi, Deputy Secretary-General of the Union des Femmes Rwandaises pour le Développement (URAMA). On this occasion, statements were made by the Divisional Officer of Gisenyi, representing the Senior Divisional Officer of Gisenyi, the Director of Economic Development Programmes for the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), representing of the Executive Secretary of CEPGL as well as by Mr. Kana Kwala Peki, Director of the Gisenyi-based MULPOC representing the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). All these statements underscored the need to revitalize the framework for concerted action on the integration of women in development. They reiterated the importance of using all human resources available in the subregion for sustainable and balanced development. Lastly, they expressed the wish that the meeting should provide an opportunity to prepare programmes which would make it possible to strengthen the role of women in the political and economic life of the States. The opening statements are reproduced as Annexes II-v.

Election of officers (agenda item 2)

4. The meeting resolved that the outgoing officers should conduct the deliberations and that the new officials be elected at the end of the meeting. Thus, the proceedings were conducted by the following officers:

Chairperson:	Rwanda
Vice-Chairperson:	Zaire
Rapporteur:	Burundi

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (agenda item 3)

5. The following agenda was adopted after the aforementioned amendment regarding the election of officers:

1. Opening ceremony
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Progress in implementation of the Abuja Declaration
4. Situation of women in agricultural and industrial transformation in the context of AAF-SAP

5. Evaluation report of training programmes for senior CEPGL women officials
6. Interim report on the publication of the seventh issue of the review "Women and Development"
7. Identification of priorities for the advancement of women in the subregion
8. Any other business
9. Election of officers of the Subregional Committee
10. Adoption of the report and recommendations
11. Closing

Implementation of the Abuja Declaration (agenda item 4)

6. This agenda item was introduced by the representative of ECA followed by reports of delegations of member States.

ECA report

7. In his report, the representative of ECA recalled the origin and content of the Abuja Declaration by stating that it was the expression of the wishes and aspirations of African women. The indicators defined by the Declaration provided for equal opportunities at the level of primary and secondary education and for girls to account for at least 40 per cent of university enrolment. In scientific and technical education where the number of girls was still insignificant, the objective was to attain at least 20 per cent of the total student population.

8. The participation of women in decision-making was also considered as a fundamental factor in the Declaration since such participation could affect all sectors of the country's life. Similarly, employment in the formal and informal sectors as well as access to resources were also highlighted.

9. The task entrusted to ECA as regarded implementation of the Abuja Declaration had a dual objective, namely (i) the widest possible dissemination of the text of the Declaration in order to sensitize all partners to the objectives defined in the Declaration and to marshall action undertaken in favour of women towards the same objectives; (ii) monitoring the follow-up of the Declaration, coordinating the implementation of its recommendations and reporting thereon to the ECA Conference of Ministers.

10. Within the framework of the dissemination of the Declaration, ECA had distributed the document in two of its working languages: English and French. It had also published a book on the strategies for the advancement of women. Finally, it had produced a video film on the Fourth Conference that would be sent to the national machinery of the various countries.

11. In addition to using such conventional means, ECA had taken advantage of meetings and encounters with other organizations, to present the African strategies for the advancement of women. Cases in point had been the Meeting of the Governing Council of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); annual consultations with the Headquarters of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), sessions of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, and a session of the joint EEC/ACP General Assembly in 1990. So far, the reaction had been positive since the Abuja Declaration had become a reference document on activities carried out in favour of African women.

12. With regard to the follow-up and coordination of the implementation of the Declaration, missions had been conducted in certain member countries. It had been possible to translate, in conjunction with national machineries, the general growth indicators into national objectives. Subregional committee meetings had also provided an opportunity to take stock of what had already achieved and to draw attention to what remained to be done.

13. ECA had made a few recommendations to speed up the achievement of the objectives of the Abuja Declaration:

(a) The designation of a focal point within national machineries to follow up the Declaration;

(b) The organization of briefing and information seminars on the content of the Declaration; and

(c) The translation of the Declaration, if possible, in to national languages.

Country reports

Burundi

14. In Burundi, a review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Abuja Declaration had revealed the progress made in all areas of activity. Boys and girls had received the same education but while the rate of school attendance of girls had increased, the major handicap remained the primary school leaving examination which had impeded the normal development of their education. The double shift system for pupils and teachers had further reduced the level of education at the primary school level. Concurrently with formal education, the country had initiated a certain number of functional literacy projects. The Association for the Advancement of Women and Children (IGAA), and the Ministry of Crafts, Youth and Vocational Education had been very active in this area.

15. There was no discrimination with regard to employment in the informal sector. The country did not yet have reliable statistics or indicators on employment in the non-structured sector where most women were found. However, support projects for women of this sector as well as women entrepreneurship were encouraged. An association of business women was about to be formed in this aspect while the Association for the Economic Promotion of Women (APEF), had been set up to enhance women's entrepreneurship and to facilitate their access to credit by providing guarantees.

16. In the area of agriculture and food production, the need to train women agricultural extension workers had been felt and a sensitization campaign conducted accordingly. Such factors as the small sizes of plots and the patrilineal system had compelled women to buy their own property. However, a draft code on succession was being prepared.

17. In terms of legislation, Burundi had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. This Convention was being implemented without any particular obstacles since most of the measures adopted already appeared in Burundi's laws. Furthermore, national agencies in charge of the integration of women in development continued to revise all

legislative instruments in order to draw up an inventory of provisions inimical to the interests of women and to propose amendments relating thereto.

18. In health, sanitation and housing, there were projects and credit lines meant to improve, primarily, the living conditions of women. Cases in point were the support project for poor families within the framework of housing and the project for mother and child health and family planning.

19. Progress had been made in the participation of women in decision-making. In the current year, Burundi had appointed, for the first time, a woman Ambassador and another been designated to direct the Structural Adjustment Programme.

20. Finally, within the framework of the follow-up of the Declaration, brainstorming sessions were organized in 1991 on strategies for the integration of women in development with the participation of senior civil servants. This had led to the adoption of very relevant recommendations designed to strengthen the role of women in the development of the country.

Rwanda

21. As in Burundi's case, Rwanda had made real progress in education. Secondary education had increased by 35 to 40 per cent in recent years. In primary education however, there had been a relatively high rate of girls dropping out while the rate of girls in higher education remained low. The country was paying serious attention to literacy.

22. There was no discrimination in employment. The non-structured sector was receiving much assistance in the area of training. The promotion of women entrepreneurship was a sustained area. An inventory of all women groups was being prepared to help provide assistance to socio-professional and other groups.

23. With regard to agriculture and food production, women's participation was estimated at 97 per cent and they had a non-negligible part in the management of joint household property. However, the technologies used were still rudimentary and were, generally, controlled by their male partners. Women were also absent in agricultural extension work. The recent appointment of a female engineer to head the agricultural extension service, augured well for the reorientation of extension services in favour of women.

24. Since women did not have their own property, they lacked collateral to serve loans. Some of them, however, started to benefit from loans granted to women's groups or from the credit schemes of the Duterimbere Association. The traditional savings system i.e. the thrift and loan system, was equally used to finance smaller projects.

25. In terms of legislation, a new family code would soon enter into force. However, some deficiencies still persisted in the particular cases of inheritance and fatherhood. A development strategy for women during the 1990s was under preparation. That strategy would make for concerted action and the pursuit of ways and means of disseminating the Declaration.

26. The Rwanda report underscored the fact that the national machinery might suffer as a result of the country's recent resolve to democratize.

Zaire

27. The report on the implementation of the Abuja Declaration revealed that, in Zaire, education had progressed on account of the measures and reforms carried out in primary and secondary education. Those measures and reforms had established a cycle of two years for arts and crafts schools, four years for technical and vocational schools and six years for the humanities. This had made it possible rehabilitate girls who dropped out from school.

28. The creation of private schools had helped to raise the rate of school attendance. Private education at the primary, secondary and higher levels had contributed immensely to this increase.

29. At the level of higher education, there had been a remarkable increase in the number of graduates and degree holders. Zaire had recommended an increase in school and university facilities between now and 1996.

30. Employment in the formal sector improved slowly while the number of women in the informal sector shot up considerably. The main reason was the ease with which women secured jobs in this sector which demanded little education and for equal qualification, fetched incomes comparable with or higher than those of the modern sector.

31. With regard to health, the number of health zones and the rate of population coverage had increased. In the urban areas, the initiative of private individuals had helped to bring health centres nearer to the people. On the other hand, there had been little progress made in nutrition due to population growth.

32. Water and sanitation problems had been given the expected attention within the framework of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

33. Both agriculture and food production had developed positively as compared to previous years but effects had not been fully felt the production system and population explosion, as a result of the non-modernization. Progress had been made in instituting measures, programmes and agricultural projects that considered women as the main actors.

34. The lack of information and training was still an obstacle to the improvement of women's output. In a bid to promote small- and medium-sized enterprises, efforts had been made to encourage women to group themselves into associations and cooperatives in order to increase their access to loans, information and training.

35. With regard to customs, laws and legislation, the National Commission for Legal Reforms had introduced in the family code provisions that favoured the advancement of women, the improvement of the legal status of women and family stability. This code had been popularized at the national and regional levels. Despite the principle of equality, there still existed legal provisions, practices and customs that were unfair to women. The Secretariat for Family Affairs was compiling an inventory of them all.

36. As regarded follow-up, the Secretariat had organized brainstorming sessions to strengthen its structures and to reorient its mandate. At the moment, it must provide standards, incentives and technical assistance. On the other hand, the Ministry of Planning and Supplies had set up within its structure, an Office for the integration of women in development whose duty is to follow up and

coordinate actions carried out in favour of women at the level of national planning and priority investment programmes (PIP).

37. The committee took due cognizance of all the reports. It commended the actions carried out by all and exhorted both the countries and ECA to continue their efforts.

Situation of Women in Agricultural and Industrial Transformation in the context of AAF-SAP (agenda item 4)

38. The representative of ECA gave the background and operation of structural adjustment programmes. She underscored the effects of adjustment on women farmers and women operating in the industrial sector. In the agricultural domain, the report revealed that adjustment sought to promote essentially export products in order to increase State revenue. This policy had relegated women involved in subsistence activities to second place. Similarly, the control of production prices concurrently with the liberalization of consumer prices had led to a price hike of essential commodities. The consequence was that the purchasing power of women farmers had fallen.

39. In the industrial sector, the structural adjustment programmes sought, above all, to rationalize industrialization. In that respect, the strict control of investment had ended up driving up a number of people,mainly women, out of business. Working women had also been seriously affected by staff retrenchments.

40. The objective of the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF-SAP) and its recommended measures were underscored. According to its rationale, the role of women in the new production structures could be focused on increasing productivity and orientating production towards the satisfaction of the people's basic needs.

41. At the level of consumption, women who run households could encourage families to give preference to locally-produced articles. Women could further increase initiatives and trade within economic integration efforts. In this respect, the honing of women's competitive edge through training and the promotion of women's entrepreneurship would provide the best means to enable them to make a meaningful contribution.

42. The report further highlighted the importance of women's participation in the mechanisms for the follow-up of development policies and measures. Early warning systems could be built into the national machineries in order to enable national action to be taken before the situation of women deteriorated.

43. Reports of member States on this agenda item showed the efforts made to mitigate the adverse effects of adjustment programmes. Burundi had been carrying out its structural adjustment programme since 1986. In order to reduce the negative effects that certain structural adjustment measures could have on the population, the Government of Burundi had given some thought to establishing a social-dimension-of-adjustment programme. Poor women of the rural and urban areas were the target groups of this programme since the privatization of public enterprises had seriously affected employment and income.

44. In Rwanda, the SAP, which had just taken off, took account of the social dimension of adjustment. The country was currently identifying ways and means of implementing the National

Action Programme so as to reduce the negative effects of the SAP in the social domain. That programme has the following three phases in which women were particularly involved:

(a) Assistance to vulnerable groups;

(b) Special PSTP/HIMO programme for labour-intensive public works; and

(c) Food aid.

45. The implementation of the structural adjustment programme in Zaire raised the need to take account of the social dimension in order to ward off the adverse effects of adjustment characterized by the deterioration of the social situation. To do this, an Adjustment Programme for the Social Sectors (APSS) was established with assistance from the World Bank. It deals with the basic education, health, nutrition and the multisectoral dimension of women. The multisectoral role of women in APSS projects, enabled them to give institutional support to the Secretariat for Family Affairs. Such support consisted in strengthening the Research and Planning Division and the National "Voice of Women" Broadcasting Centre.

46. The general debate on this issue revealed that the negative effects of SAP were felt, essentially, in the area of employment and access to resources. However, the Committee noted those such as the Social Dimension of Adjustment (SDA) and National Social Action Programmes designed to mitigate the effects of adjustment. The Committee deemed it important to identify those measures related to women, and felt that all women concerned should be duly informed. Hence, there was a need to disseminate information on adjustment policy instruments and to train women so as to enable them to participate in the negotiation and implementation of such programmes.

47. The committee concluded that in order to allay fears of the adverse effects of SAPs, the national machineries should design early-warning systems suited to the conditions prevailing in each country.

Evaluation report on MULPOC training programmes (agenda item 5)

48. The representative of the ECA secretariat introduced the report on MULPOC training programmes conducted from 1987 to 1989. It revealed that such training had dealt with varied topics such as selected seeds, management, planning, survey techniques and cooperatives. The analysis showed that the topics of seminars and the choice of speakers had been appreciated and the training had had a positive impact on the professional situation of the beneficiaries.

49. However, a few problems were raised in the evaluation report had to do with:

(a) The highly varied levels of participants;

(b) The problem of following-up the programme;

(c) The need to treat certain topics in detail;

(d) The short duration of seminars; and

(e) The absence of women in certain specialized programmes such as the training in selected seeds in which only one woman participated.

50. The Committee insisted strict rules must be applied in the selection of candidates for training so as to enable the beneficiaries to gain the most from it. It endorsed the recommendations of the report namely: (i) the matching of training to employment requirements; (ii) the judiciary selection of lecturers; (iii) the promotion of sharing among participants; (iv) enhancement of the training of trainers; (v) establishment of a service for the selection and monitoring of trainees; and (vi) the assignment of a training officer to the MULPOC.

Interim report on the publication of the review "Women and Development" (agenda item 6)

51. The representative of the secretariat reminded the Meeting that the intergovernmental experts had recommended that the publication of the Women and Development review should be continued. Considering financial difficulties relating to the preparation of articles for the review, the experts had also recommended that the MULPOC should envisage the possibility of having the national machineries participate in the production of the articles. However, contributions had not been submitted.

52. After lengthy debate on the resources available for the collection of articles, the Committee reiterated the need to pursue the publication of the review with assistance from national machinery which were invited to designate focal points for the collection of articles for the review. Articles were expected to reach the MULPOC by the end of April and of October to enable timely publication of the review, in June and December of each year. Finally, the Committee recommended that the review should be produced in sufficient copies for wide distribution and that individual articles should be elicited from women.

53. With regard to readership, it was suggested that in order to ensure the wide circulation of the review, the MULPOC should send it directly to national machineries, women in responsible positions and to the heads of such machineries in the various regions of Zaire. For the two other countries, copies of the review could be sent to national machineries for onward distribution.

Identification of priorities (agenda item 7)

54. The Committee considered the priorities set by each country and adopted the following for the subregional programme:

(a) Coordination of the WID programme at the subregional level;

(b) Training and information;

(c) Population, health and nutrition;

(d) Strengthening of national machineries for the integration of women in development; and

(e) Break-down of statistics by sex.

Activities to be carried out under these priorities have been reproduced in the table below.

Any other business (agenda item 8)

55. Under this item, the Committee requested ECA to procure funding to enable the countries to participate in its meetings. It also recommended the holding of subregional committee meetings two days before the meetings of MULPOC experts.

Election of officers (agenda item 9)

56. The following were elected as the incoming officers of the Committee:

Chairperson:	Zaire
Vice-Chairperson:	Burundi
Rapporteur:	Rwanda

Adoption of the report and recommendations (agenda item 10)

57. The report and recommendations were adopted with a few amendments.

Closing ceremony (agenda item 11)

58. The meeting rose at 7 p.pm. on 26 March 1992.

PRIORITIES PROPOSED BY THE COUNTRIES AND ADOPTED

PRIORITIES PROPOSED			PRIORITIES ADOPTED FOR THE SUBREGION
BURUNDI	RWANDA	ZAIRE	
- Market research on artisanal products - Follow-up of the study on the establishment or strengthening of extension centres for women - Organization of a seminar on foodstuff preservation techniques	- Health and nutrition - Promotion of female entrepreneurship - Environment - Support to national machineries - Education in the science and technical fields - Law and legislation	- Information - Training - Inclusion of women in national-level programmes; - Strengthening of national statistical mechanisms - Establishment of an information office at the MULPOC	1. Coordination of the WID Programme at the MULPOC level 2. Training and information in the areas of: - Extension work - Entrepreneurship - Science and technology - High-level planning - Food preservation techniques 3. Population, Health and Nutrition - Analysis of the situation and design of a regional assistance programme 4. Strengthening of national machineries for the integration of women in development - Inclusion of WID issues in all sectors - Mobilization of human and financial resources - Subregional seminar and national symposium on the problems facing national machineries in the context of democratisation 5. Strengthening of statistical facilities - Breakdown of statistics by sex

RESOLUTION

The Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development, meeting in Gisenyi on 25 and 26 March 1992,

Considering the recommendations of the twelfth meeting of the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development and ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 714(XXIV) requesting that subregional committee meetings should be organized,

Aware of the importance of these meetings for revitalizing and strengthening the programme for the integration of women in development in the subregion of the Great Lakes countries,

Convinced that training and information are the basic development tools,

Considering the importance of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the socio-economic life of the countries,

1. Welcomes the holding of the sixth meeting of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development;

2. Expresses its appreciation to the member States of the subregion for sending delegates to the meeting thus demonstrating their commitment to the advancement of women and requests them to identify their efforts to organize the subsequent meetings and activities;

3. Urges member States to do their utmost to ensure the participation of women in meetings of the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development, the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole and the ECA Conference of Ministers;

4. Further urges member States and the Gisenyi-based MULPOC to intensify their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the approved priority programme;

5. Recommends that a systematic assessment of the effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes on women should be conducted and an early-warning system established to forestall such effects;

6. Requests member States and the MULPOC to ensure that information relating to implementation of the subregional programme on women in development is widely circulated.

ANNEX I

Vote of thanks

Participants in the sixth meeting of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development held on 25 and 26 March 1992 in Gisenyi on the premises of the MULPOC for the CEPGL countries:

Express their keen appreciation to the authorities of the Republic of Rwanda for the facilities provided to enable the smooth running of their deliberations;

Also express their appreciation to the three member States for having been kind enough to pay for the participation of their delegations to the meeting as a testimony of their commitment to the promotion of the advancement of women;

Further express their keen appreciation to the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa and the entire MULPOC support staff for the hard work which resulted in the success of the meeting of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development;

Strongly encourage the incoming bureau of the Subregional Committee, particularly its Chairperson, to pursue the revitalization of the subregional structures for the integration of women in development.

Done at Gisenyi
This 26th day of March 1992

Annex II

Statement by the representative of the host country

Madam Chairperson of the Subregional Committee
for the Integration of Women in Development,
Representative of the Executive Secretary of the
CEPGL,
Director of the MULPOC, representing ECA,
Invited guests,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this city of Gisenyi. I am all the more gratified on this occasion as the women of the subregion of the Great Lakes countries have not been able to hold a meeting of the Subregional Committee for four years now.

It is true that delegations of the three countries to the subregional experts meetings have always included high-ranking women and also discussed issues relating to women in the subregion. Nevertheless, this practice could never replace the framework for consultation on all issues relating to the integration of women in the development process that this Committee affords.

Indeed, the women in this subregion are a major human resource potential for development. Their role in the various key development sectors needs no further demonstration. Our countries should, therefore, support their activities and strengthen their ability to attain the objectives they have set themselves.

Looking through the agenda of your meeting, I have noticed that the Committee is going to discuss topics of such vital importance as the implementation of the Abuja Declaration, which defined the role of women in the 1990s, the situation of women in the current structural transformations, particularly in agriculture and industry which have the most repercussion on women, evaluation of the training programmes which are the very basis of growth and the exchange of information which is the best vehicle of progress. These are issues of particular concern to Rwanda. In fact, Rwanda attaches great importance to promoting the economic activities of women and increasing their productivity, particularly that of rural women who are the majority, and to environmental protection.

I wish you a pleasant stay in Gisenyi and a fruitful sharing of your respective experiences. I am fully convinced that the priorities you define for the subregion will address the realities of our countries.

Thank you.

Annex III

Statement by the representative of the Permanent Secretariat of CEPGL

Madam Chairperson of the Subregional Committee
for the Integration of Women in Development,
Honourable Deputy Prefect of the Gisenyi Prefecture,
Director of the Gisenyi-based MULPOC,
Distinguished invited Guests, delegates,

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes countries, who would have liked to be present at this meeting had it not been for his heavy schedule of activities, I have the honour to address your meeting and to transmit to you his sincere greetings and wishes for a pleasant stay in Gisenyi.

The Executive Secretary of the CEPGL attaches great importance to this meeting because it is an ideal framework for the exchange of views and experiences on the integration of women in development in the CEPGL subregion.

This framework will enable us to highlight the hurdles already cleared and what remains to be done to achieve a dynamic socio-economic development in which women can play their full role.

Indeed, the integration of women in development is central to the achievement of sustainable development, particularly in third world countries where women, although very actively involved in production, are not given adequate support in accomplishing their noble task. Many have expressed the desire to see an improvement of the situation. The situation should, by all means, change so as to make these wishes a reality, because women are the cornerstone of development and no development is possible without them.

A number of economic, social and cultural activities have been undertaken in the various CEPGL countries. In these, priority has been given to training with a view to improving the condition of women at all levels.

At the subregional level, sustained efforts have been made with respect to sensitization, training and information of women on development, among other things.

In this connection, several seminars have been organized in the various areas concerned with the integration of women in socio-economic development. The Gisenyi MULPOC has organized seminars, with the assistance of international organizations and friendly countries, on such priority sectors as agriculture, development planning, management and small-scale industry.

From enthusiasm shown by the participants in these seminars, it has to be hoped that they would be followed up with concrete action. Accordingly, meetings between various women professionals and various areas of expertise were organized for consultation and exchange of views on action to be taken to improve the living conditions of women and to enhance their participation in national life as a whole.

Very important activities have been conducted by women at the national level, individually or collectively, within the context of women's cooperatives or groupings.

It is within this framework that certain projects have been initiated and others pursued to support women's groups engaged in income-generating activities and to facilitate the access of women to credit to enable them to invest in small-scale projects such as livestock breeding, communal farms, food shops, handicrafts, etc.

Such actions should be encouraged, supported and carried through until the full integration of women in development. The States should take account of these actions and give them adequate priority in their national socio-economic development plans in conformity with the Abuja Declaration of November 1989 which recommended the establishment of more solid bases for the accordance of priority to projects for the advancement of women in national development planning.

Invited guests,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The CEPGL countries have embarked upon a process of socio-economic recovery and transformation through the policy of Structural Adjustment Programmes, initiated with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is a very difficult but indispensable exercise. Women should play a primary role in the process of change by participating actively in all its stages; in no way should they suffer the adverse effects of the said programmes.

I am convinced that at the end of your discussions and exchange of views you will draw very useful conclusions and make recommendations that would enable you to define concrete actions to be undertaken as a matter of priority at both national and subregional levels for the overall advancement of women.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed directly or indirectly to the integral development of women, particularly donors who finance activities for the promotion of women and I would encourage them to pursue the noble task they have started.

We would like to appeal particularly to UNDP to resume the funding of such activities which it had started to finance but then subsequently stopped. We would request the UNDP to consider favourably the possibility of financing the post of coordinator of women's activities in our subregion under the Fifth Programming Cycle which is being prepared.

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, allow me to reiterate the firm conviction of the Permanent Secretariat of the CEPGL that the integration of women in development is an inevitable path to harmonious and balanced socio-economic development.

I sincerely hope that your discussions will lead to contributions and recommendations that will make for progress in this very important area at the national, regional and international levels.

I thank you.

ANNEX IV

STATEMENT BY MR. PEKI KANA KWALA, DIRECTOR OF GISENYI, MULPOC

Distinguished Representative of the Gisenyi Prefecture and
of the Prefect,
Chairperson of the Subregional Committee,
Secretary General of the Ministry of Planning,
Representative of the Secretariat of CEPGL,
Distinguished Delegates,
Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Mr. Issa Diallo, Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), I welcome you to this sixth meeting of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development. I would start by sincerely thanking the Sub-Prefect of the Gisenyi Prefecture who has willingly sacrificed his precious time to attend this opening ceremony. I also thank the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) for his ready participation and co-operation in all the activities of the MULPOC since his appointment to that high office.

As you know, this meeting is particularly significant not only for ECA, the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) but also for the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC).

It is important not only because of its objectives but also for the opportunity it provides us to come together as we have not been able to do during the past four years when the MULPOC' women's concertation framework broke down. We could not but rejoice over this long-awaited opportune occasion which will enable us to take stock of the efforts made by each and every one of us to involve women in the development of the subregion and to put our heads together in order to find out how best to orient our programmes for the advancement of women of the CEPGL subregion.

Allow me to convey the gratitude of ECA to member States which, by paying for their delegations to participate in this meeting, demonstrated their commitment to the advancement of women. We also thank the MULPOC policy organs for including regularly in the agenda of their meetings issues relating to the integration of women in development. This shows the importance that the subregion attaches to the full participation of women in development.

Mrs. Chairperson,

You will recall that at its last session, the ECA Conference of Ministers urged member States to strengthen their machinery for integrating women in development. In fact, most of the established mechanisms lack sufficient material and human resources, and this minimizes their capacity to cope with their immense task.

It is, however, heartening to note that the three member countries of CEPGL have dynamic and fully operational mechanisms, the latest of which URAMA (Urunani rw' Abanyarwandakazi mu Majyambere) is taking part, for the first time, in the meetings of this Committee. We salute it and wish it all the best.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will have observed that the agenda of this meeting is particularly heavy. In fact, the Committee should review the extent to which the three countries of the subregion have implemented the Nairobi Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Abuja Declaration on participatory development: the role of women during the 1990s. That review should enable us to prepare adequately for the 1995 World Conference.

You will recall that the last review of the implementation of the Arusha and Nairobi Strategies for the Advancement of Women carried out by the Fourth Regional Conference in Abuja, revealed that the situation of women had deteriorated in many African countries.

What with economic stagnation and, in cases, negative growth, rapid population growth, the increased debt burden and the reduction of public spending on social programmes the possibility of improving the status of women has been reduced considerably. While the review showed that genuine progress had been made in the fields of education, legislation, agriculture and food production, such progress has not always led to a significant improvement in the day-to-day living conditions of women. The situation of women with respect to employment and access to health care and to resources have shown signs of regression. It is, therefore, indispensable for the Committee to define the direction and priorities of programmes for the promotion of women.

The Committee should also study the situation of women agricultural and industrial transformation under AAF-SAP. Given the importance of the role of women in these sectors, the Conference of Ministers requested that African women should be informed of the ongoing structural changes and the way in which they affect the living conditions of the people.

We are convinced that the high-level structural adjustment experts present in this hall will enrich our debates.

During this meeting, the Committee will review the activities conducted by the MULPOC within the scope of its mandate.

An assessment of the training programme for women officials in the subregion and the activities relating to information exchange on women and development will be submitted to you for analysis. The results should help in the definition of priority areas, taking into account the general evolution of the political, economic and social conditions in the subregion.

Mrs. Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,
Invited Guests,

Before concluding, allow me to note that ECA attaches great importance to the role of women in the economic life of their countries. Hence ECA organized, in October 1991 in Nairobi,

a meeting of experts responsible for studying the modalities for establishing a regional association of women entrepreneurs. These experts strongly recommended the establishment of a Federation of African businesswomen. ECA is convinced that the Federation will inter-alia, help to encourage women to take economic initiatives, identify business transactions among women and expand the scope of their business activities. ECA has started collecting available information on the existing national associations of businesswomen as well as on the measures currently being taken to bring together women entrepreneurs. ECA hopes to receive all available information on this subject to enable it to achieve the objective of effectively establishing the Federation, before the end of this year.

Mrs. Chairperson,

I must, before ending my statement, mention that women have many challenges to face during the 1990s. For example, the democratization process and its accompanying political changes require that women redouble their efforts in order to remain visible in the political life and decision-making of their individual countries. With the ongoing economic transformations the labour market will be increasingly more demanding. Therefore, women need to increase their competence, initiative and innovative spirit in order to withstand competition. Finally, they should also face up to the worsening environmental degradation problem. I am certain that during the deliberations, this Committee will address this global situation and recommend an operational programme that will have a sure impact on the living conditions of women in the subregion.

I wish the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development every success in its deliberations.

Thank you.

ANNEX V

Statement by the outgoing Chairperson of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development

Distinguished representative of the Prefecture of Gisenyi,
Distinguished representative of the CEPGL Secretariat,
Distinguished Director of the MULPOC,
Distinguished representative of the African Training and Research Centre for Women,
Distinguished Delegates,
Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasant opportunity and a genuine pleasure for me to express our deep gratitude for the importance you continue to attach to the Integration of Women in Development.

Once again, in spite of the many duties you have to perform, you have just proved this by finding the time to grace with your presence the opening of the sixth meeting of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development.

Permit me also to extend our sisterly greetings, our warm welcome and to wish a pleasant stay in Rwanda to our sisters from Burundi and Zaire.

My sincere thanks also go to our respective Governments for taking the necessary steps to send delegations to participate in the work of the sixth meeting of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development.

For the degree of his devotion to duty and the efforts he has made to promote the advancement of women in general and for the holding of this meeting in particular, my thanks also go to the MULPOC Director.

Distinguished representative of the Prefecture of Gisenyi,
Distinguished representative of the CEPGL Secretariat,
Distinguished MULPOC Director,
Distinguished representative of ATRCW,
Distinguished delegates,
Invited guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Committee welcomes this distinctive opportunity which will enable participants to evaluate the specific activities conducted in promotion of the advancement of women in our subregion. Such activities include:

- The progress made in the implementation of the Abuja Declaration;

- The situation of women within the context of Representative of AAF-SAP and other activities.

This meeting will also enable us to set priorities that will further promote the participation of women in development.

One of the roles that the Committee has successfully played has been to impress upon governments and national machineries in the subregion the importance of giving women their rightful place in various development programmes.

We are therefore happy to see that the authorities in our three countries are showing increasing interest in gender issues and addressing them at various subregional meetings.

Aware of the importance of regional meetings on the integration of women in development, particularly those meetings devoted to formulating strategies and assessing the situation of African women, the Committee, whose term of office ends today, has participated in two major such meetings, namely:

- The fourth African Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development held in Abuja, Nigeria in November 1989 and which evaluated the implementation of the Arusha Forward-looking Strategies. It should be recalled that that Conference coincided with the celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development. It should also be mentioned that one of the achievements of ARCC has been the establishment of Subregional Committees like this one in the various MULPOCs;

- The twelfth meeting of the ARCC held in Addis Ababa in April 1991 which dealt mainly with the issues of:

  . The progress made in the implementation of the Abuja Declaration;

  . The role of African women in the agricultural and industrial transformations occurring within the context of Representative of AAF-SAP; and

  . Membership of ARCC in which connection I am pleased to say that our subregion is honoured to serve as second Vice-Chairperson of ARCC until April 1992.

The significant participation of the Subregional Committee in these various meetings, together with the many achievements with regard to the advancement of women in our three countries, do not however, make us forget that the work of the Committee during its term of office has been done under particularly difficult conditions, mainly financial and the fact that the Gisenyi MULPOC has no permanent coordinator of women's programmes.

We entertain the hope that the issue of having a coordinator is also the concern of officials at all levels and will soon be specifically and satisfactorily addressed.

Distinguished representative of the Prefecture of Gisenyi,
Distinguished representative of the CEPGL Secretariat,
Distinguished Director of the MULPOC,
Distinguished representative of the African Training and Research Centre for Women,
Distinguished Delegates,
Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Without anticipating overmuch the recommendations that my sisters will have occasion to formulate in order to help the Committee to achieve its objectives, I would like to state here that the countries in our subregion should continue to sustain the national machineries dealing with women's issues and would hope that the country which has yet to set up a high-level institutional framework for coordinating women's programmes would be able to do so in order to give impetus to emerging initiatives and to consolidate our gains.

We continue to appeal to international donor agencies whose support has, to date, been highly appreciated to continue providing their support during these particularly trying social and economic times which might well make our efforts to promote the advancement of women stagnate, if not actually lose ground.

My hope is that the work of this sixth meeting of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development will give a new thrust and a new lease of life to the advancement of women in the Subregion.

Long live our cooperation within the framework of the Gisenyi MULPOC,

Long live the Integration of Women in Development,

I thank you.